

## **Section 1: Identification of Duplicative Government Programs**

This amendment directs the Comptroller General of the Government Accountability Office to conduct routine investigations to identify programs, agencies, offices, and initiatives with duplicative goals and activities within Departments and government-wide and report annually to Congress on the findings, including the cost of such duplication and with recommendations for consolidation and elimination to reduce duplication indentifying specific rescissions.

### **Exhaustive Lists of Federal Programs Do Not Exist**

Although various sources, including the PART program assessment tool, USA Spending, and documents released by OMB and CBO produce partial lists of various government programs, there is not an exhaustive list of federal programs.

In only a few weeks of work, my office compiled a list of over 640 duplicative federal programs that overlap each other and various efforts at nearly every agency. Every federal department is now administering programs that address challenges tasked to be addressed by other agencies.

Over the past five years, efforts to conduct oversight of duplicative government programs have been routinely delayed because it is very difficult to compile a complete list of government programs, broken down by each federal department.

Despite repeated requests to CRS, GAO, and individual departments for an exhaustive list of federal programs addressing a certain matter, or a list of programs administered by an individual department, those conducting oversight are told over and over again that no such list exists and it would be too time consuming and nearly impossible to produce such a list.

In other words, the government has grown so large and unmanageable, that even the experts, and the departments themselves, cannot compile a list of all federal programs within their purview.

The only agency it appears as been able to produce a truly usable list of programs is the Department of Education, which periodically release a "Guide to US Department of Education Programs." The latest version for 2009 is over 340 pages and details nearly 220 federal education programs funded and administered by the Department.

This reference guide has enabled congressional oversight staff to take a detailed look at education programs and identify areas of duplication, which in turn can and should be used as Congress addresses education issues and can work toward eliminating this waste and duplication in order to save taxpayers money, reduce our soaring national debt, and produce higher quality education programs for children across the country.

### **GAO Reports and other studies reveal a widespread duplication through the federal bureaucracy**

Various GAO reports and other oversight studies over the last few years examining small portions of federal funding provide a long list of examples of numerous federal programs that overlap and duplicate other federal efforts.

#### **Examples**

- In 2005, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that 13 different federal agencies spent nearly \$3 billion from 2004 to 2007 to fund 207 federal programs to encourage students to enter the fields of math and science.
- According to a 2003 GAO report, to the tune of \$30 billion, the federal government funds more than 44 job training programs, administered by nine different federal agencies across the federal bureaucracy.
- According to data from the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, 14 departments within the federal government and 49 independent agencies operate exchange and study abroad programs.
- A 2009 GAO report found 69 early education programs administered by nine different agencies.
- A 2005 GAO study found there are a total of 23 federal housing programs target or have special features for the elderly.

**In order for Congress to conduct meaningful oversight and write law that actually addresses the needs of the country, we must have access to information as simple as a list of all federal programs.**

These examples serve as an indication that Congress has failed to make choices during the legislative process to consolidate and eliminate duplicative and failed government programs, and in fact, continues every year to pass legislation

creating more and more government programs, despite the thousands that already exist.

Congress has created a program (or several in most cases) and poured billions of dollars into these programs, in order to address nearly every issue and problem faced by any individual, group, or entity across the country. And yet, many of these problems and challenges still exist today, as if the government never even tried to address it.

Many of these challenges such as homelessness, poverty, education, juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, and hundreds others, remain today—homelessness rates, education testing, juvenile crime rates remain unchanged and unimproved, despite decades of federal programs and billions of dollars in taxpayer funding spent to alleviate and address these concerns.

Throughout the FY 2011 appropriations process this year, I plan to offer an amendment to every appropriations bill, requiring each federal department to account for how it is spending taxpayer funding, by created a reference guide listing all of its federal programs, their annual funding levels, and the purpose of each program.

The President promised repeatedly on the campaign trail, to require agencies to go “line-by-line” through their budgets and produce savings from eliminating waste and consolidating programs. This amendment, requiring GAO to assist agencies in doing just that, is a first step toward achieving the President’s goal of eliminating waste and duplication in the federal bureaucracy.